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Contra Costa College tried several ways to reach potential students who were unaware that they were eligible or even that the college had anything to offer them. Articulation with high schools, contacts with other agencies, and the mass media were of little help. The idea of a central, off-campus counseling center was abandoned in favor of the Mobile Counseling Center. It began operating in 1967. Its aims were to provide service for dropouts, whatever the cause; extended counseling service for the community; stronger connections with other agencies; easy access to material on educational programs, upgrading courses, financial aid, career planning; a decrease of frustration by working with the client in his own environment; individual and group counseling to foster valid decisions; a better college image; and recruitment of students. Staffed by a counselor-driver and clerk, the van is limited to the area where most of the disadvantaged live; it works as an extension of the regular college counseling service. Other agencies welcomed the unit. It did not duplicate their work, but removed a specific service from their load. A modified therapeutic approach helps the client first identify his need (job, school, or both) and choose from several ways of filling it. The author discusses referrals, interviews, client characteristics, and how to orient to a career those who live amid unemployment. The author's evaluation and the response to a questionnaire show a high degree of success for the center. (HH)

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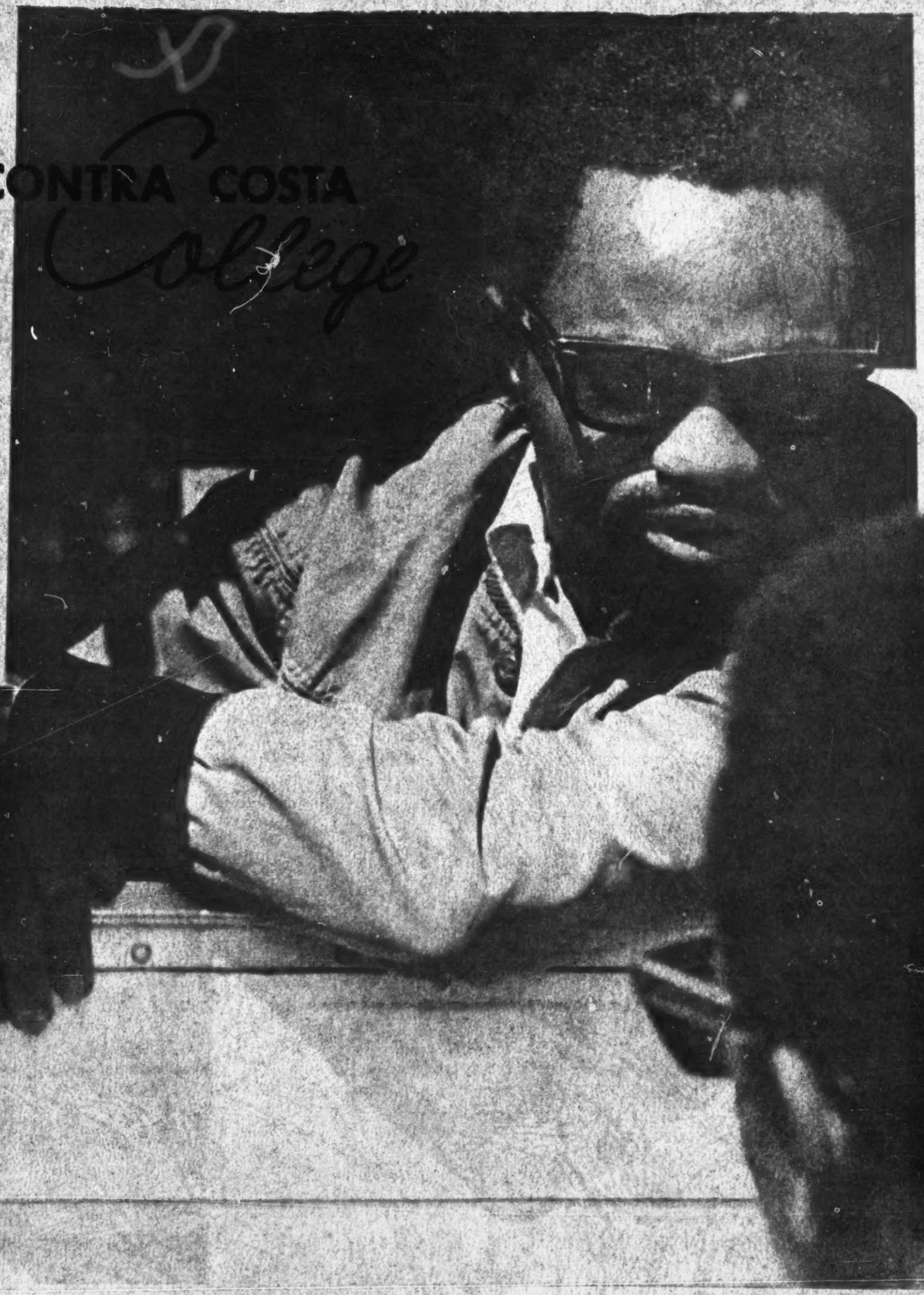
CONTRA COSTA

College



JC 690 284

MOBILE COUNSELING CENTER

A PROGRESS REPORT
JUNE 1969

25

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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EVALUATION OF THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION OF THE CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE MOBILE COUNSELING CENTER

Submitted by

Anthony T. Gordon--Counselor

To

The Governing Board of the Contra Costa Junior College District

The Mobile Counseling Center Advisory Board

Plan of Action for Challenging Times, Educational Clearinghouse Inc.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUL 23 1969

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

Organizations Represented on Mobile Counseling Center

Advisory Board

Baptist Ministerial Union
California State Employment Service
City of El Cerrito
City of Richmond
City of San Pablo
Community Services for Spanish Speaking People
Contra Costa College Department of Counseling
Contra Costa County Social Service Department
Greater Richmond Inter-Faith Program
Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance
Neighborhood House
People Pledged for Community Progress
Richmond Southside Center
Richmond Unified School District
San Francisco Bay Girl Scout Council
San Pablo-Parchester Community Organization
State of California, Richmond Service Center
West Contra Costa County Council of Churches

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INTRODUCTION

Contra Costa College is an accredited, two-year public junior college providing state college and university parallel curricula and a wide range of vocational-technical programs designed to train students for immediate employment. Any person who is 18 years of age or is a high school graduate is eligible to attend the college.

As a result of its open door policy and its diverse offerings, the student body varies widely in interest, aptitude, and ability. Thus, comprehensive counseling and guidance services are provided to help students with their educational, vocational, and personal goals.

Even though the college is now drawing a diverse student population and a high proportion of local high school graduates, much more could be done in the way of encouraging attendance by all those in the community who might benefit from the junior college offerings. ...

...Although some effort is now made to work through high school counselors in encouraging students to attend Contra Costa College, this effort is obviously not as effective as it might be. In addition, there is an attrition rate of approximately 30% between the start of the ninth grade and graduation in the local Richmond Unified School District. Therefore, there are undoubtedly many youths in the community who might profit from a junior college program but who may not know they are entitled to attend. Certainly they have not been encouraged to attend.

It is quite likely that those potential students who receive the least encouragement for college attendance are concentrated in the poverty pockets of the area. The college has only recently discovered that the attendance of financially deprived students is not as high as expected. (Bessire et.al. 1967, pp. 3-4.)

The alert reader should find a number of serious questions implicit in the preceding paragraphs. Some of the more obvious questions are as follows:

1. What is the role of the community college?
2. To what extent should the community college go to fulfill its stated objectives?
3. What should the community college do to encourage attendance by local high school graduates?
4. What should the community college do to offset the apparent ineffectiveness of conventional methods of recruiting?
5. Should the community college be concerned with the plight of the high school dropout? If so, to what extent?
6. How much information does the Richmond community have about Contra Costa College's entrance requirements and program offerings?
7. What is the relationship between the adequacy of information dissemination and low enrollment?
8. What kind of image does the Richmond community have of Contra Costa College?

Although this report is aimed at evaluating the first year's operation of the Mobile Counseling Center, the writer feels confident that much of the data collected will directly or indirectly speak to most of the questions implicit in the opening paragraphs.

Needless to say, many of these questions are very deep and will penetrate far below the surface of Contra Costa's outer shell. The responses to these questions will doubtlessly threaten many individuals--perhaps to the point of causing them to express violent objections to them.

Despite any beliefs to the contrary, it is the writer's opinion that the educational system in general, and Contra Costa College specifically, has reached the point in its growth and development where it can no longer afford the luxury of turning away from its responsibilities. All issues--whether real or imagined or whether they support the system or threaten its very existence--must be met head on with serious attempts to resolve them.

The writer has unyielding faith in his belief that Contra Costa College has the ingredients necessary for the making of a model institution. Over the past five years the administration, faculty, and staff have consistently demonstrated a desire to strengthen its weaknesses by experimenting with unique and innovative programs without undue concern for the risks involved. In many respects Contra Costa College has been a leader among its sister community colleges throughout the State and indeed, the nation. The Contra Costa College Mobile Counseling Center is an outward manifestation of the quality of the leadership.

My thanks are due to the many administrators, faculty, staff, and students who supported the concept of mobile counseling with their interest, enthusiasm, cooperation, and ideas. I'm especially indebted to President Ray Dondero for his courageous efforts in securing the resources necessary to launch this project. I'm equally indebted to the administrators and staff of the many public and private agencies, who unselfishly cooperated with me in my efforts to prove the worth of this venture. I am also grateful to all of the clients who voluntarily sat through hours of counseling interviews--often without immediate results. Finally, let me thank Myrna and Carole for their moral support during my hours of frustration and depression.

Section 1 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENT

Background:

> Even though the college is now drawing a diverse student population and a high proportion of local high school graduates, much more could be done in the way of encouraging attendance by all those in the community who might benefit from the junior college offerings. A committee of faculty and students recently met to study this problem, and many instances were cited of the college's failure to communicate with potential students. It was pointed out by one student, who was a high school drop-out and is now student body president, that many potential students were unaware that a high school diploma is not required for admission. He, himself, discovered only by accident that he would be admitted. Another student had visited a local high school recently and had found seniors in that school to be uninformed and misinformed about the junior college. One faculty member, in his own spare time, has attempted to recruit students for his ... program, and has discovered that most students are not aware of his or other ... programs. (Bessire et. al., 1967.)

The concept of mobile counseling grew out of an almost desperate need on the part of the administration of Contra Costa College to better serve the Richmond community. It was assumed that if one student was uninformed about the entrance policies and programs of this college, perhaps many other potential students were equally uninformed. It was quite evident at that time, and still is to a large deg.ee, that the extensive use of mass media as a means of disseminating information was at best ineffective.

Numerous attempts to alleviate the problem were made but with little success. Articulation agreements between the college and local high schools raised hopes--not enrollment. Direct contact with community agencies did little to solve the problem. Much consideration was given to the notion of establishing a centrally located counseling center off campus, but after much deliberation, that idea was abandoned in favor of a more flexible center--a counseling center on wheels--the Contra Costa College Mobile Counseling Center.

A proposal for funding the Mobile Counseling Center was developed in 1967 and sent to various public and private agencies. Despite the uniqueness of the concept, all of the agencies,contacted rejected the proposal. However, many individuals were confident that this concept could add new dimensions to the field of counseling and indeed to the whole field of education. President Ray Dondero was perhaps the strongest supporter of the concept. He worked tirelessly to change an idea, which was then a dream, into an operation which is now a reality. The project was finally funded by the Contra Costa Junior College District which provided approximately 75% of the funds, in cooperation with Plan of Action for Challenging Times, Educational Clearinghouse, which provided approximately 25% of the funds.

Purposes:

The purposes of the Mobile Counseling Center are:

To extend the counseling services of the college to the communities which it serves.

To provide counseling services to persons who otherwise would not make use of them especially those who have dropped out of high school, those who completed high school but are employed, those who live in disadvantaged areas and those who do not respond to ordinary communications approaches.

To bridge the communications gap between the college and the community by building a working relationship with all community agencies--both public and private.

To provide immediate access to essential information relative to educational opportunities, educational programs, job up-grading programs, financial aids and career planning.

To minimize the frustrations caused by referrals and re-referrals, that necessarily take place in a more centralized setting, by working with the individual in his immediate environment.

To provide individual and group counseling services designed to foster meaningful decision making.

To strengthen the image of Contra Costa College in the Richmond community.

To encourage students to attend Contra Costa College.

Scope:

The Mobile Counseling Center operates exclusively in western Contra Costa County and specifically in Richmond and the unincorporated areas north of Richmond. The geographical area in which the Mobile Counseling Center operates is limited for practical reasons.

Presently, the staff of the Mobile Counseling Center consists of one full-time counselor (who is also the driver) and one student clerical assistant. Because of the present size of the staff, it would be physically impossible to serve a larger area. An extension of the service area would also reduce the effectiveness of the operation.

Another, perhaps the most important, reason for limiting the service area of the Mobile Center is because the largest number of minority and disadvantaged people live in western Contra Costa County.

"Three-fourths of the overall growth in the western county's population during the last five years is due to the increase in the Negro population. And all of the increase in the Negro population was confined to the western strip." (Wilson, 1965.)

Section II

IMPLEMENTATION

The Mobile Counseling Center is presently housed in a 24 foot Beechwood, self-propelled mobile home. During the planning stages of the operation, some consideration was given to a towed unit (i.e., trailer) with similar dimensions, but that idea was soon abandoned for obvious reasons. A towed trailer would be considerably more expensive and equally as awkward to maneuver on city streets.

The interior is custom made to the specifications of the counselor. Because of the expert assistance of a faculty member who teaches experimental design, the interior is not only beautiful but functional. It is beautiful primarily because of the color coordination. It is functional because of layout and space utilization.

The inside of the van is divided into two compartments, separated by a sound-proof wall and pocket door. The front compartment has three stationary chairs (including the driver's seat), two portable chairs, three portable tables, and a filing cabinet. Although it has been used primarily as a reception room, it can be used to serve a variety of other purposes. The rear compartment has two stationary chairs, one portable chair, a filing cabinet, a desk, and a bookcase. This compartment is designed exclusively for individual counseling.

Approximately ten weeks were spent in preparing the Mobile Center for operation. Aside from the time spent in designing and supervising the preparation of the physical plant, many hours were spent outlining a plan of action and developing the criteria for evaluation.

It is appropriate at this time to give credit to the counseling staff of Contra Costa College for its high degree of perceptiveness in formulating the basic plan under which the mobile unit is operating. While the concept of mobile counseling was still in the proposal stages, the counseling staff was asked to react to three basic questions related to this concept.

Question: Get reaction to the basic idea of a mobile unit--will it work? React to the whole concept of a mobile unit as opposed to having the community come to us.

Reaction:
(a) Counselors unanimously support the unit on an experimental basis.
(b) Need to be realistic. Must be on a limited basis, able to carry out any promises made, such as job opportunities and curriculum offerings.
(c) Are the efforts to be directed toward poverty, or to education and community service? Which is a broader category? Prefer a broader scope, i.e., information, public relations, testing, counseling, etc.
(d) Objective: Education plus jobs; for educational purposes? Suggest multipurpose approach.
(e) Jobs only; too limiting, and very unrealistic.

(f) Where will the unit be parked when in the field? Secretary? Sanitary facilities? Telephone in unit?
(g) Good as an experiment.
(h) Provide information for counselors and faculty. Feedback may be the most significant aspect of the experiment.
(i) What would we do if we got 500 students? "101" courses not completely adequate...
(j) That the purpose of the unit not be racially oriented; many Caucasian pockets where educational attitudes are also poor...
(k) A two-way street. Gather information that will make our institution more effective. Help make the curriculum more realistic. Should be specifically associated with multi-service center...in San Pablo, North Richmond, and Parchester Village.

Question: If you support the above approach, where should the control lie?

Reaction: (a) Student Services plus support from social science and "skill" departments--mathematics, English, vocations, etc.

Question: How should we staff this? What kinds of models should we construct?

Reaction:
(a) Full-time counselor, with strong support from campus.
(b) Must have counselor aides.
(c) Should be seen as a part of the regular counseling service.
1. An extension of the college with roots in the Counseling Department.
2. An advisory board strongly recommended.
Hopefully, this would include some individuals from the communities.
3. One counselor cannot handle counseling and testing.
(d) Will this make us "recruiters?" "College for college's sake" will appeal to very few.
(e) The tutoring program and placement services are seen as an integral part of this program, and, as such, must be strengthened.
(f) Summary:
As an overall program, the unit should serve as an all-inclusive vehicle as an extension of college-community services. This precludes focus on any one area, group, or problem. (Counseling Department Memo, 1967.)

Needless to say, the reactions of the counseling staff, as delineated in the previously mentioned memorandum, contributed immeasurably to the goals set forth in the final plan. The goals are as follows:

1. To extend the counseling services of the college to the community in an effort to provide services to the entire community rather than a small segment.

2. To provide direct educational, vocational, economic, motivational, and personal counseling assistance to minority group members and youngsters in poverty areas of the Richmond community.

3. To establish lines of communication between Contra Costa College and community agencies--i.e., schools, churches, recreation centers, community action centers, etc.--for purposes of:

   a. improving articulation.

   b. building a positive image of the college.

   c. bridging the existing communications gap between the college and the community.

   d. facilitating recruitment to the college.

   e. disseminating information relative to educational, occupational training opportunities.

Upon completion of the goals and aims, it was necessary to devise an effective way of carrying them out. Close examination of the goals revealed similarities between those of the mobile center and other existing public agencies. Despite the apparent duplication of efforts, the mobile unit had far more flexibility than any centralized agencies, and could, therefore, be used to reinforce their efforts.

The mobile center could reinforce or augment community agency efforts by serving as a liaison between the agency and the college. Clients who were interested in extending their education or learning about training programs could be referred directly to the mobile center by the agency involved. Clients who had problems that could not be solved through the mobile center could be referred to the appropriate agency.

Since a significant number of poor and minority people are already registered with many social and community service agencies, it seemed logical to use these available resources to make initial contacts with clients. Thus, a reciprocating agreement was made with each agency.

First, a list was obtained of all known social and community service agencies in the Richmond area with respective staff contacts, addresses, and telephone numbers. Concomitantly, newspaper releases were sent to local newspapers for publication.

Each agency was contacted by the counselor to establish a convenient time when the project could be discussed. Approximately fifty hours were spent discussing it with the personnel of more than twenty agencies. By the time approximately half of the agencies had been contacted the newspaper articles had been released, and other agencies which had not been contacted were calling for appointments.

Most of the personnel in each agency appeared to be very enthusiastic about the project and expressed a willingness to assist in making it a success. There seemed to be little or no expressed concern for the apparent duplication of efforts. Several of the agencies seemed to accept it as a welcomed relief, because of high case loads and limited staff, coupled with limited information about Contra Costa College.

Upon completion of the public relations campaign, an advisory committee was organized. One representative from each agency was selected to serve on the committee. The function of the committee would be to assist the counselor by pointing out ways to make the operation more effective.

While the public relations campaign was being carried out, brochures describing the operation were being printed for distribution during the "open house" phase of the operation.

Open house was held on the campus on November 8, 1968 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The idea was to familiarize the students, teachers, and administrators with the project. It was received enthusiastically. On November 11, 1968, the Mobile Counseling Center officially went into operation. Open house was held at all participating agencies during that week. Brochures were distributed, and specific questions regarding the operation were answered in greater detail than during previous meetings.

Before the open house phase was completed, referrals were already being made. For the first two months, it appeared as if the Mobile Center was moving on an uncharted course. That is to say, there was little real counseling taking place. Most of the clients seemed to be seeking information about jobs. It was during that period that the counselor found that all of the clients were similar in that they had no real notion about what they wanted to achieve in life. They had somehow managed to by-pass the whole area of decision making and goal setting as it relates to occupational choice. Each client appeared to convey a message of desperation relative to his economic condition. He needed a job--any job, and he needed it immediately. This was frustrating to both the counselor and the clients. The counselor was frustrated because he had no jobs to give. The clients were frustrated for the same reason.

These contacts can best be described as <u>one shot contacts</u>, because they provided no reason for the client to return.

There was obviously a need to change the course of the operation or at least the technique of counseling. A new technique was employed which can best be described as a <u>modified therapeutic</u> approach. Using a personal data card, the counselor could pose questions designed to help the client to look at his situation objectively. The client could first identify the cause of the problem, and over a number of scheduled interviews (a minimum of three) he could choose one of a number of alternatives which would serve as a possible solution to his particular problem. This method is still being used because it seems to have more meaning for the clients in general. It is certainly less frustrating and dispels any false hopes which the client might have upon entering the unit. It seems to create an air of confidence between the client and the counselor, because the client knows that <u>he</u> must take some steps (with the help of the counselor) to solve his own problem. This method also permits the counselor to develop case studies of his clients, some of which will be presented later in this report.

Section III FINDINGS

The data in this section focuses on several major issues surrounding the operation of the Mobile Counseling Center. First, it vividly supports many, if not all, of the assumptions on which this operation is based. Secondly, it highlights numerous needs which escape ordinary perception. Finally, it should serve as food for thought for persons interested in working with poor and/or minority groups.

These findings represent approximately 600 hours (by conservative estimation) of service spread over a five month period. They do not reflect the additional time spent in meetings and conferences, nor the time involved in the compilation of this report.

Referrals: During the period beginning November 11, 1968 through May 18, 1969, over 300 persons were referred to the Mobile Counseling Center from the following referral sources:

Community Service for Spanish Speaking People
Contra Costa County Probation Department
Job Up-grading (Neighborhood House)
Neighborhood House (Jade Street Branch)
Off-campus drop-in
On-campus drop-in
People Pledged for Community Progress
Peres Elementary School
Richmond (Day) Adult Education School
Richmond Boys Club
Richmond Employment Service (including NYC section)
Richmond Service Center
San Pablo-Parchester Community Change Project
Southside Center

Of the more than 300 referrals received from the sources listed above, 140 received individual counseling. The minimum amount of time spent with each client was 50 minutes. Fifteen out of the 140 individual contacts had a minimum of three follow-up interviews. Of these receiving follow-up interviews, three were placed on jobs, nine were enrolled in Contra Costa College, and three were referred back to agencies.

Characteristics: The characteristics shown in the following charts are separated into two broad groups. Those shown in the charts labeled age, sex, and ethnic group are characteristic of the total number of contacts, (N=300). Those shown in the charts labeled education, career choice, and marital status are characteristic of the persons receiving individual counseling (N=140).

Other characteristics such as employment history, personal needs, and counselor expectations could have been shown graphically. Due to oversights or imperception during the planning stages, no provisions were made for recording such data. However, some generalizations relative to those characteristics will be drawn from numerous notes and tape recordings of interviews made by the counselor.

N=300	AGE
Age Level	% of Total Contacts
7-12	33
13-18	20
19-24	25
25-30	18
31-36	2
37-42	1.5
43-48	.5

N=300	SEX
	% of Total Contacts
Male	53
Female	47

N=300	ETHNIC GROUP
	% of Total Contacts
Black	94
White	4
Brown	2

N (Male) =79

N=140

N (Female) =61

EDUCATION COMPLETED

% of Female*		% of Male*		% of Total (N)*	
5th	2	5th	0	5th	1
7th	2	7th	0	7th	1
9th	2	9th	10	9th	9
10th	21	10th	19	10th	20
11th	31	11th	34	11th	31
12th	26	12th	29	12th	27
GED	10	GED	5	GED	7
13th	6	13th	3	13th	4

*All % correct to nearest whole

N (Male) =79

N=140

N (Female) =61

CAREER CHOICE

	% of N*
Decided	
Male	25
Female	51
Undecided	
Male	75
Female	49
Total (N)	
Decided	36
Undecided	64

*All % correct to nearest whole

N (Male) =79

N (Female) =61

N=140

MARITAL STATUS*

	% Single	% Single w/Dependents	% Married w/Dependents
Male	80	14	6
Female	29	49	12
Total (N)	59	33	8

*All % correct to nearest whole

Career Choice (Notes): The percentages shown in this chart are meaningless without an explanation. At first glance, even to a keen observer, they are misleading. They appear to suggest decisiveness, balances, and indecisiveness, and perhaps that is true to some extent. However, they have deeper meanings.

Out of all the cases cited (N=140), less than five percent of the clients had made a meaningful career choice based on their true desires. But, this five percent was engaged in, or seriously considering, becoming engaged in the work necessary to insure success in their chosen career field.

Many others indicated on the personal data card an interest in a given field. However, personal interviews revealed many contradictions between their stated objectives and their plans for reaching them. There are many cases in point, such as: (1) the young man who expressed a desire to become an electrical engineer but had no interest in going to college. (2) the young woman who wanted to go to college to become a telephone operator (3) the woman who wanted to teach elementary school but had an aversion to small children.

It is the writer's opinion that these blatant inconsistencies in the decisions of these clients in no way discredit them, but simply reflect the educational system through which they have come. As one author put it, they have been "educated to fail."

As a result of his experiences in the Mobile Counseling Center, the writer has discovered a rather interesting paradox that pervades all education. Fundamentally, education is designed to prepare youth to succeed in the world of work--something to which they are rarely exposed. However, by the time they reach twelfth grade, they are expected to make decisions about their life work.

Decisions--indeed career decisions--cannot be made in a vacuum. They must come as a result of some positive exposure. How can the child, who comes from a family where unemployment prevails, be expected to know what he wants to do or, better yet, know what is available for him to do as a means of livelihood? If he can muster the courage to make a career choice and reach his objective, it is almost surely dependent on a quirk of fate.

The child who comes from a family where everyone is employed, and perhaps in a variety of fields, has a decided advantage. But given an exposure where unemployment prevails, with an absence of parental pressures, the advantaged child would probably be as indecisive as the child from the low or no income home.

Work History. Most of the clients who came into the Mobile Counseling Center had performed a wide variety of menial jobs. Many of them had had as many as five jobs over a period of one year. They had worked as groundsmen, custodians, factory laborers, car hops, construction laborers, nurses aides, domestics, etc. Few had worked in the apprenticeable trades or in entry level professional and semi-professional jobs.

Their attitudes about work was generally positive. That is to say, they all wanted to work and did not mind working as long as they did not feel degraded by the job or persecuted by the supervisors. Their reasons for working were many and varied, but, generally speaking, they could all be clustered under the heading of survival. Work was a means to an end--a way of getting the things that everyone else has--a means of survival.

Personal Needs: Most of the personal needs expressed were economic in nature. Most of the clients were willing to enter short term training programs, some were willing to go to college for a year or more, but almost none were willing to consider long range planning for preparation to enter the work force. Most of the needs were immediate, some seemed almost desperate.

Expectations of the Counselor: It is difficult to discuss these clients' expectations of the counselor without mentioning the negative experiences which they have had in their relations with counselors. Most of these youths are high school drop-outs. Needless to say, they see themselves as failures--failures, perhaps, because of their lack of exposure to meaningful counseling experiences.

Throughout their educational lives, these clients have seen counselors as "bad guys" --perhaps rightly so. Traditionally, counselors have been required to wear many hats, i.e., advisor, programmer, disciplinarian, playground monitor, and teacher. Of course, the problem child remembers him best as a disciplinarian.

What do high school drop-outs expect of the counselor? They expect dogmatic advice without personal involvement. This statement is supported by an almost universal response to the question: What do you want me (the counselor) to do for you? "I want advice on how to get a job...advice on how to get into college...advice on how to improve myself, etc.

With each client who came in for counseling, it was necessary to get him in a good psychological mood for counseling. This included setting up an atmosphere of basic trust--the establishment of good rapport--providing a means by which the client could get involved in the interview. Obviously these objectives are easier said than done; however, they are part and parcel of any good counseling relationship.

Counselor's personal experiences: Despite the many moments of frustration, depression, anxiety, etc., my experiences in the mobile counseling center have been most rewarding. Things that once made me anxious now have little effect upon me, things that once worried me suddenly do not seem important, and things that I once had ambivalent feelings about are now clearly defined. It is almost as if I have been reborn.

Shortly after being notified of my appointment as counselor for this project, I began to seriously entertain all sorts of WASPish notions about counseling black youth--as though they were alien to my experience. Despite my honest intention to work with all drop-outs, I felt that the vast majority of my clients would be black.

I spent all summer trying to resolve such questions as: How should I dress? How should I talk? How should I react to a hostile client? Should I arm myself against possible vandals? What should I do to protect my furniture from dirty clothes? These are only some of the questions that I sought solutions to. If they sound absurd, it is because they are. Comfortable solutions came as a result of me taking a second look at my youth and realizing that I too could have been a drop-out by a simple toss of the coin. The solution was a very simple one--be yourself. I finally decided to dress as I please, talk as I normally do, react to all clients honestly and effectively, forget about vandalism, and damn the furniture.

When school started in September, I felt very proud of myself for already having resolved these questions. Each time one of my colleagues would ask me one of the questions, I could reply arrogantly, "That is the least of my worries."

Perhaps the most frustrating experience I had (and still have) was the one relating to punctuality. At the beginning, there was nothing that irked me more than to drive four or five miles to meet a client only to find him not there. Why didn't he show up? He could have had the courtesy to call me before I made this trip. How ungrateful can a person be? Doesn't he appreciate what I'm trying to do for him? ...Disrespect for time...a lack of responsibility.

It was only a matter of time before I resolved this conflict. One day I asked a client to describe a day in his life. This is what he said, "I wake up in the morning and get dressed, then I eat. I leave home and go to one or two places to try to get a job--I get the run-around every where I go. Then I go down to the pool hall to try to make some money--sometimes I make some--sometimes I don't. I stay there until I get tired--then I go home. Sometimes I watch television, sometimes I go to sleep. When I wake up I go back to the pool hall. Most of the time I go home about midnight."

It became quite evident to me after hearing this account of one client's daily activities that he in fact has no respect for time. How could he? He appears to be living in a world where time is of little importance. He does the same thing everyday--nothing!

In response to the question of responsibility, I firmly believe that responsibility is as much a developmental process as learning to walk. If a person does not have the opportunity to practice responsibility, it is highly probable that he will not become proficient at it--as it is with the person who does not practice walking.

The most rewarding experience which I have had is best reflected in the following summary case study.

> This client was a twenty-six year old male who came to me as a referral from one of the resource agencies. He was thoroughly disgusted with himself for having made some bad decisions.
>
> He had more than five years of successful work experience when he quit his job to make some easy money. His scheme ended in failure and left him without financial resources.
>
> When he came to me he was in a state of desperation. However, he had taken time to work out a set of goals for himself, and he appeared ready to begin achieving them.
>
> His plan was a simple one. He wanted to go to college and become a social worker, but he needed a job to sustain himself while in school. He was not selective about the kind of work he would do. However, he would prefer working in the apprenticeable trade for which he was trained.

We had three private interviews, during which time we discussed his plan, his reasons for making that choice, the amount of work necessary to reach his objective, the difficulty involved in adjusting to school after a long absence, etc. I was convinced that this client was serious. First I referred him to a job where he is presently employed and doing well. I later enrolled him in college on a part-time basis. He drops in to see me occasionally to discuss his classes. He is having some difficulty making the adjustment, but there is little doubt in my mind that this client will succeed.

Section IV

CONCLUSIONS

With such a small sample, it is difficult to make any broad generalizations about the effectiveness of the Mobile Counseling Center. However, there is substantial evidence to support the basic assumptions on which this experiment is based. My conclusions are as follows:

1. There is a need for a direct means of disseminating information to high school drop-outs, the unemployed, the poor, and the community at large.

2. Many people are unaware or have misinformation about the educational and occupational opportunities available to them at Contra Costa College and at other institutions throughout Contra Costa County.

3. Many people have misinformation about the entrance requirements at Contra Costa College.

4. Individuals who have been "put down," rejected, dispossessed, dehumanized, etc. seem to be reluctant to go into highly structured, more centralized public agencies and, therefore, respond positively to an unstructured atmosphere like that of the Mobile Center.

5. Many people are unable or afraid to go directly to an agency for assistance and are, therefore, greatly relieved to know that they can call for personalized services.

6. There is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction among the poor with the counselors in the various state and county assistance agencies.

7. Agency personnel seem to welcome the opportunity to work directly with a representative from the college whom they all know.

8. Since the advent of the Mobile Counseling Center, the image of Contra Costa College in the community has been significantly improved.

9. Many people seem to be more responsive when they are in private, in their own environment, talking with someone whom they feel they can trust.

10. The counselor must be highly sensitive to the needs of the individuals to whom he is providing service.

In order to insure against possible biases on the part of the counselor, it was decided that all participating agencies would be given the opportunity to evaluate the operation of the Mobile Counseling Center from a services-rendered point of view.

A brief questionnaire was sent to 18 agencies requesting participation in the evaluation. 61 percent of the agencies responded. A copy of the questionnaire with summary statements from all responding agencies appear on the following two pages.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Agency Evaluation of the Mobile Counseling Center

1. Are you aware that Contra Costa College is operating a Mobile Counseling Center?

   If the answer is "yes," explain in detail how you found out about it. Include a statement as to how you first found out about it. How you obtained details about its operation, your initial impressions about the concept after obtaining details, etc.

   9 respondents --- Through staff presentation by the counselor

   2 respondents --- Newspaper article and later staff presentation

2. Has your agency had the occasion to make use of its services?

   If the answer is "yes," please explain how you found out about the Center and the details related to its operation, your initial impressions about the concept after obtaining the information, etc.

   9 respondents --- (yes) counseling services to clients and general information dissemination

   1 respondent --- (yes) counseling services to clients and inservice training to staff

   respondent --- (no)

3. Do you feel that the concept of "mobile counseling" has any value for the field of counseling? Explain.

   All respondents --- (yes)

   (a) provide contact with community
   (b) Improves recruiting
   (c) serves persons who do not seek counseling
   (d) reduces fears and minimizes red tape
   (e) informal--relaxed atmosphere

4. What are some of your criticisms relative to its present method of operation? How do you think it can be improved?

5 respondents --- none

2 respondents --- needs more publicity

1 respondent --- needs more staff, evaluation by clients, should be detached from school administration

2 respondents --- improve communications and scheduling

1 respondent --- more advisory committee participation

5. What are your impressions of the counselor as a professional person?

3 respondents --- no judgment

8 respondents --- (a) impressive
(b) competent
(c) respect for clients
(d) effective
(e) aware of client's needs
(f) sensitive to his role
(g) articulate
(h) versatile

Section V

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

1. That this project be continued.

2. That the unit be completed with internal electricity, drinking water, adequate heating, and additional lighting.

3. That a full-time clerk-receptionist be hired to take care of clerical responsibilities and to improve communications.

4. That an on-going college readiness program be implemented to make recruiting more meaningful.

5. That vocational programs be organized to absorb incoming students and to provide adequate training for employment.

6. That bi-annual workshops be held to keep the entire faculty attuned to the needs of these students, as well as to their responsibilities and teachers.

7. That an on-campus counselor be assigned to work with students who are recruited through the mobile center.

8. That the counseling department be reorganized so as to facilitate successful educational experiences for all students.

9. That the Developmental Education Committee be changed to the Department of Developmental Education so as to make an on going college readiness program more meaningful.

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